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TM
INTRODUCING:
STEEL WIND!
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Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE GHOST RIDER!®

BEWARE THE STEEL WIND!

J. M. DeMATTEIS and BOB BUDIANSKY (SCRIPTER) CO-PLOTTERS (PENCILER) DAVE SIMONS (INKER) JOE ROSEN (LETTERS) BOB SHAREN (COLORS) TOM DeFALCO (EDITOR) JIM SHOOTER (BOSS)

WITH A BLAST OF HOT AIR AND A MECHANIZED ROAR, SHE IS AMONG THEM! HER EYES ARE COLD--EMOTIONLESS--AND HER LIPS BETRAY ONLY THE SLIGHTEST TRACE OF AN ARROGANT SNEER!
THE BIKER NAMED STEEL WIND HAS ARRIVED--AND THE QUENTIN CARNIVAL WILL NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN!

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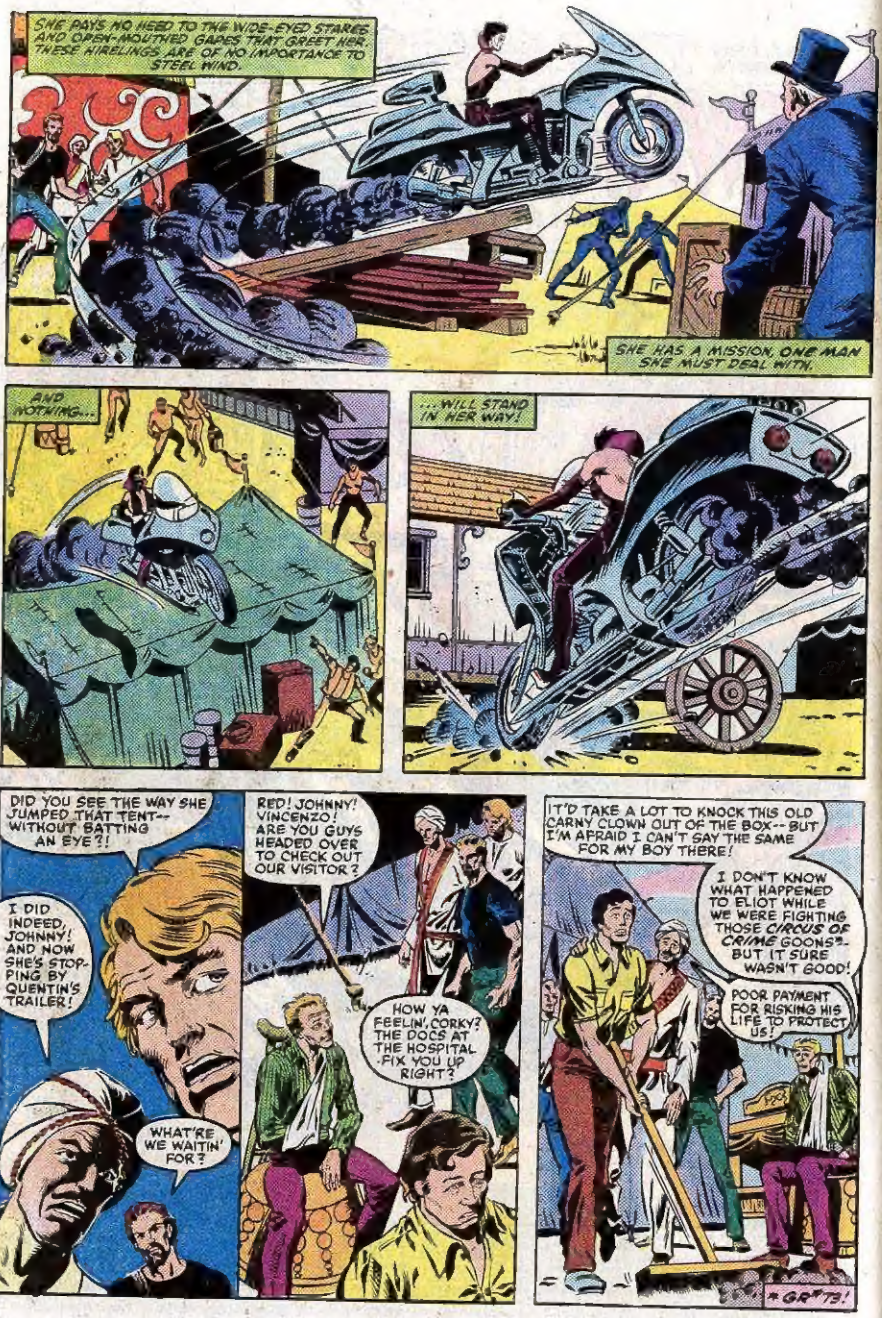
SHE PAYS NO HEED TO THE WIDE-EYED STARES AND OPEN-MOUTHED GAPES THAT GREET HER. THESE HIRELINGS ARE OF NO IMPORTANCE TO STEEL WIND.
SHE HAS A MISSION. ONE MAN SHE MUST DEAL WITH.
AND NOTHING...
...WILL STAND IN HER WAY!
DID YOU SEE THE WAY SHE JUMPED THAT TENT--WITHOUT BATTING AN EYE?!
I DID INDEED, JOHNNY! AND NOW SHE'S STOPPING BY QUENTIN'S TRAILER!
WHAT'RE WE WAITIN' FOR?
RED! JOHNNY! VINCENZO! ARE YOU GUYS HEADED OVER TO CHECK OUT OUR VISITOR?
HOW YA FEELIN', CORKY? THE DOCS AT THE HOSPITAL FIX YOU UP RIGHT?
IT'D TAKE A LOT TO KNOCK THIS OLD CARNY CLOWN OUT OF THE BOX--BUT I'M AFRAID I CAN'T SAY THE SAME FOR MY BOY THERE!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO ELIOT WHILE WE WERE FIGHTING THOSE CIRCUS OF CRIME GOONS?--BUT IT SURE WASN'T GOOD!
POOR PAYMENT FOR RISKING HIS LIFE TO PROTECT US!
*GRRTS!

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NO ONE KNOWS THIS BETTER THAN JOHNNY BLAZE...
...FOR IT WAS HIS DEMONIC SECOND-SELF--THE VENGEANCE-SEEKING GHOST RIDER--WHOSE MYSTIC HELLFIRE REDUCED ELIOT TO THIS WRETCHED STATE!
THE NETHERSPAWN KNOWS NO GUILT, BUT BLAZE CARRIES ENOUGH FOR THEM BOTH.
AH, ELIOT--NOT EVEN THE GREAT VINCENZO CAN WORK THE MAGIC NEEDED TO RETRIEVE YOU FROM MADNESS! BUT I CAN AT LEAST--
PING!
--BRING A LITTLE BEAUTY INTO YOUR LIFE! IT IS NOT MUCH, MY FRIEND...BUT, SOMETIMES, IT IS ALL WE HAVE!
BLAZE! I FIGURED THAT YOU AND RED WOULD COME RUNNING WHEN YOU SAW STEEL WIND!
YOU'RE WONDERING WHY WE NEED ANOTHER STUNT-BIKER AROUND HERE WHEN WE ALREADY HAVE YOU TWO, HUH? WELL, RED'S GOT NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT--
--BUT YOU CAN PACK YOUR GEAR AND GET OUT OF HERE! YOU'VE BEEN REPLACED, BLAZE!
WHAT?!
HIS FIRST RESPONSE IS RAGE--BUT THAT IS SOON SWALLOWED BY A FATALISTIC SUBMISSION.
IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT, MR. QUENTIN...

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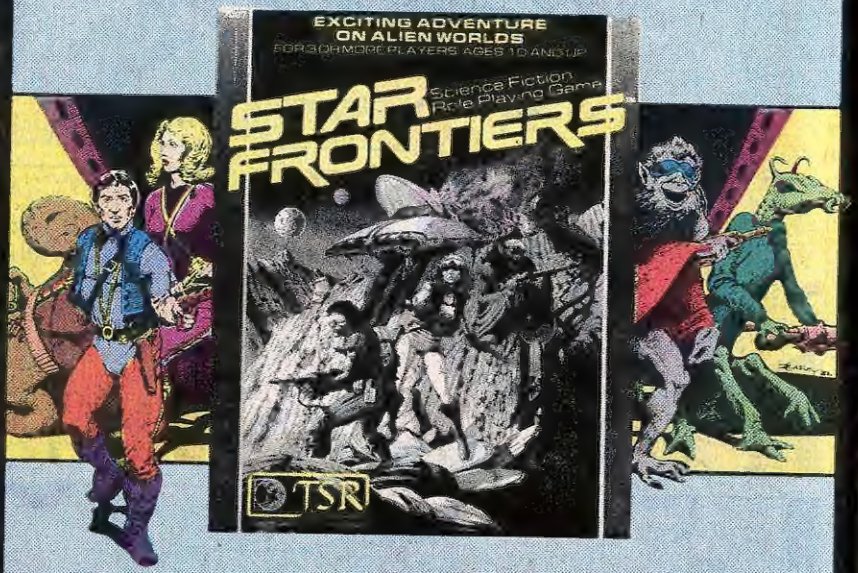
Defend The Galaxy...



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QUENTIN, YOU SNAKE! IF YOU THINK YOU CAN TOSS MY PAL OUT ON HIS BUTT AFTER--
--HE...!
THE GLOVED HAND SLAPS DOWN HARD--APPLYING PRESSURE UNTIL RED FOWLER'S WRIST COMES WITHIN A HAIRSBREADTH OF SNAPPING!
THEN, SMILING MIRTHLESSLY, STEEL WIND RELEASES HER GRIP...
I TRUST THE DEBATE HAS BEEN ENDED, GENTLEMEN!
FOR NOW, QUENTIN. FOR NOW!
INTERLUDE.
SUPERETTE
IT'S JUST ANOTHER BUS DEPOT IN JUST ANOTHER TOWN IN THE AMERICAN HEARTLAND.
BUT THE YOUNG WOMAN BOARDING THIS SOUTHBOUND GREYHOUND IS SOMEWHAT MORE... EXTRAORDINARY.
SHE IS A TORTURED SOUL WITH A BURDEN AND A HOPE.
THE BURDEN IS--UNSPEAKABLE--WHILE THE HOPE IS NAMED--
--JOHNNY BLAZE!

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NIGHTFALL.
YOU'VE GOT TO LISTEN TO ME, JOHNNY!
I DIDN'T GO TRACKING YOU DOWN AND DRAGGING YOU BACK HERE * JUST TO SEE YOU TURN AROUND AND LEAVE AGAIN!
THAT'S THE POINT, RED! I SHOULDN'T HAVE COME BACK! I DON'T ... BELONG HERE.
*LAST ISSUE!
NOT TO TAKE SIDES OR ANYTHING, JOHNNY-- BUT IF YOU ARE GOING, I WOULDN'T MIND A RIDE.
I'VE FINISHED MY MAGAZINE ARTICLE ABOUT CARNY LIFE AND--
JOHNNY IS NOT LEAVING, MISS RANDOLPH.
VINCENZO! LOOK, I WON'T BE--
COME OUTSIDE, MY FRIEND, PLEASE--
--AND SEE WHY YOU CANNOT LEAVE!
THE CARNIVAL IS ONE MIND--ONE SOUL-- A FAMILY! AND FAMILIES DO NOT TAKE KINDLY TO BEING BROKEN UP! YOUR FAMILY WANTS YOU TO STAY, JOHNNY--AND THAT'S JUST WHAT WE ARE GOING TO TELL QUENTIN!
I-I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY! I'M NOT WORTH ALL THIS TROUBLE!
YOU ARE MORE THAN WORTH IT, MY FRIEND! COME!
HMMM. WOULDN'T THIS MAKE AN INTERESTING SIDEBAR TO GO WITH MY STORY! CYNTHIA, OLD GIRL-- MAYBE YOU SHOULD STICK AROUND JUST A WEE BIT LONGER!
WHAT THE DEVIL'S GOING ON HERE? WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS?
SIMPLE, QUENTIN! WE WANT THAT WOMAN GONE BY MORNING!
BLAZE STAYS-- OR THERE'LL BE TROUBLE!

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WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE, MAKING DEMANDS OF ME? THIS IS MY CARNIVAL --BUILT ON MY SWEAT--
-- AND OURS, MR. QUENTIN!
OR HAVEN'T YOU NOTICED THAT WE'VE ALL BEEN BUSTIN' OUR BACKS TO GLUE BACK TOGETHER THE SHAMBLES THE CIRCUS OF CRIME LEFT OF THIS PLACE?
AND NOBODY'S WORKED HARDER THAN JOHNNY! HOW CAN YOU TURN ON HIM LIKE THIS?
YOU! YOU! YOU'RE RIGHT.
TOMORROW, THEN --WE'LL ARRANGE A CONTEST BETWEEN JOHNNY AND STEEL WIND. THE VICTOR CAN... STAY.
MOLLIFIED, THE CROWD DEPARTS. AND THEN...
DON'T WALK AWAY FROM ME, QUENTIN!
WH-WHAT DO YOU WANT?
THE MASTER WILL NOT BE PLEASED BY YOUR SHOW OF WEAKNESS!
WEAKNESS? WHAT'S WEAK IS THAT I'M HELPING YOU! WHAT'S WEAK IS TURNING AGAINST MY OWN PEOPLE!
HOW VERY NOBLE! BUT YOU WERE NOT SO NOBLE YEARS AGO, WERE YOU? NOT QUITE SO... COMPASSIONATE.
SHE STALKS ANGRILY INTO THE SHADOWS, LEAVING QUENTIN TO CONFRONT THE SHADOWS OF HIS OWN PAST...
...EVEN AS JOHNNY BLAZE PONDERS HIS TOO-TENUOUS FUTURE...
TH-THEY ALL STOOD UP FOR ME! THEY... CARE ABOUT ME!
I CAN'T LET THEM DOWN TOMORROW!
OF COURSE YOU'LL LET THEM DOWN, BLAZE! YOU ALWAYS LET THEM DOWN!
YOU'RE WEAK!
ONLY THE GHOST RIDER CAN WIN THIS RACE FOR YOU!
NO! I'LL DO IT ON MY OWN!

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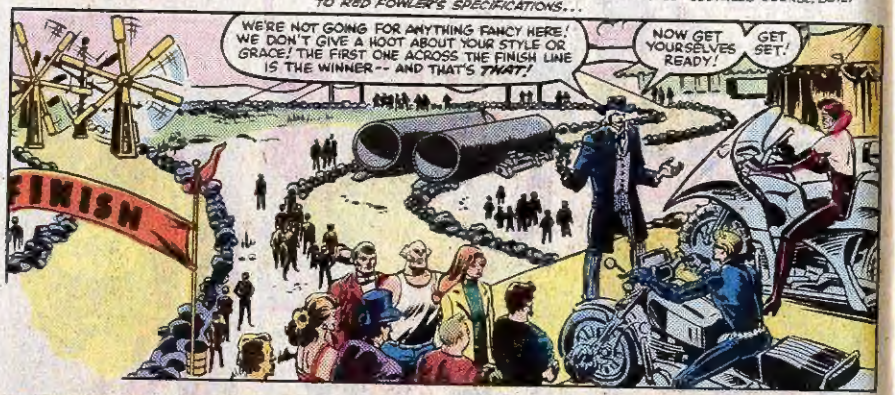
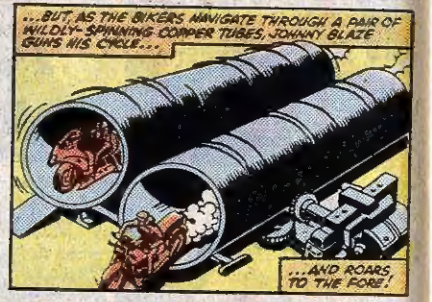
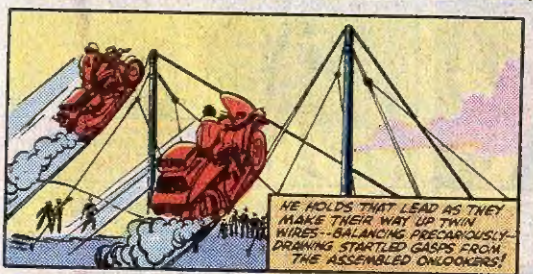
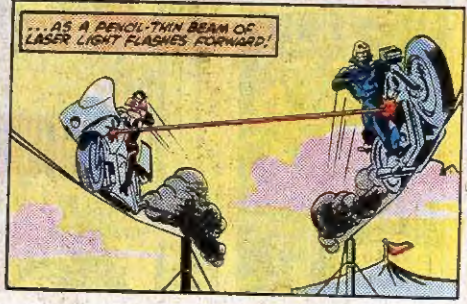
MORNING COMES--BRINGING WITH IT ANXIETY, ANTICIPATION--AND A HASTILY-CONSTRUCTED OBSTACLE COURSE, BUILT TO RED FOWLER'S SPECIFICATIONS...


WE'RE NOT GOING FOR ANYTHING FANCY HERE! WE DON'T GIVE A HOOT ABOUT YOUR STYLE OR GRACE! THE FIRST ONE ACROSS THE FINISH LINE IS THE WINNER-- AND THAT'S THAT!
NOW GET YOURSELVES READY!
GET SET!
FINISH


...BUT, AS THE BIKERS NAVIGATE THROUGH A PAIR OF WILDLY-SPINNING COPPER TUBES, JOHNNY BLAZE GUNS HIS CYCLE...
...AND ROARS TO THE FORE!


HE HOLDS THAT LEAD AS THEY MAKE THEIR WAY UP TWIN WIRES--BALANCING PRECARIOUSLY--DRAWING STARTLED GASPS FROM THE ASSEMBLED ONLOOKERS!



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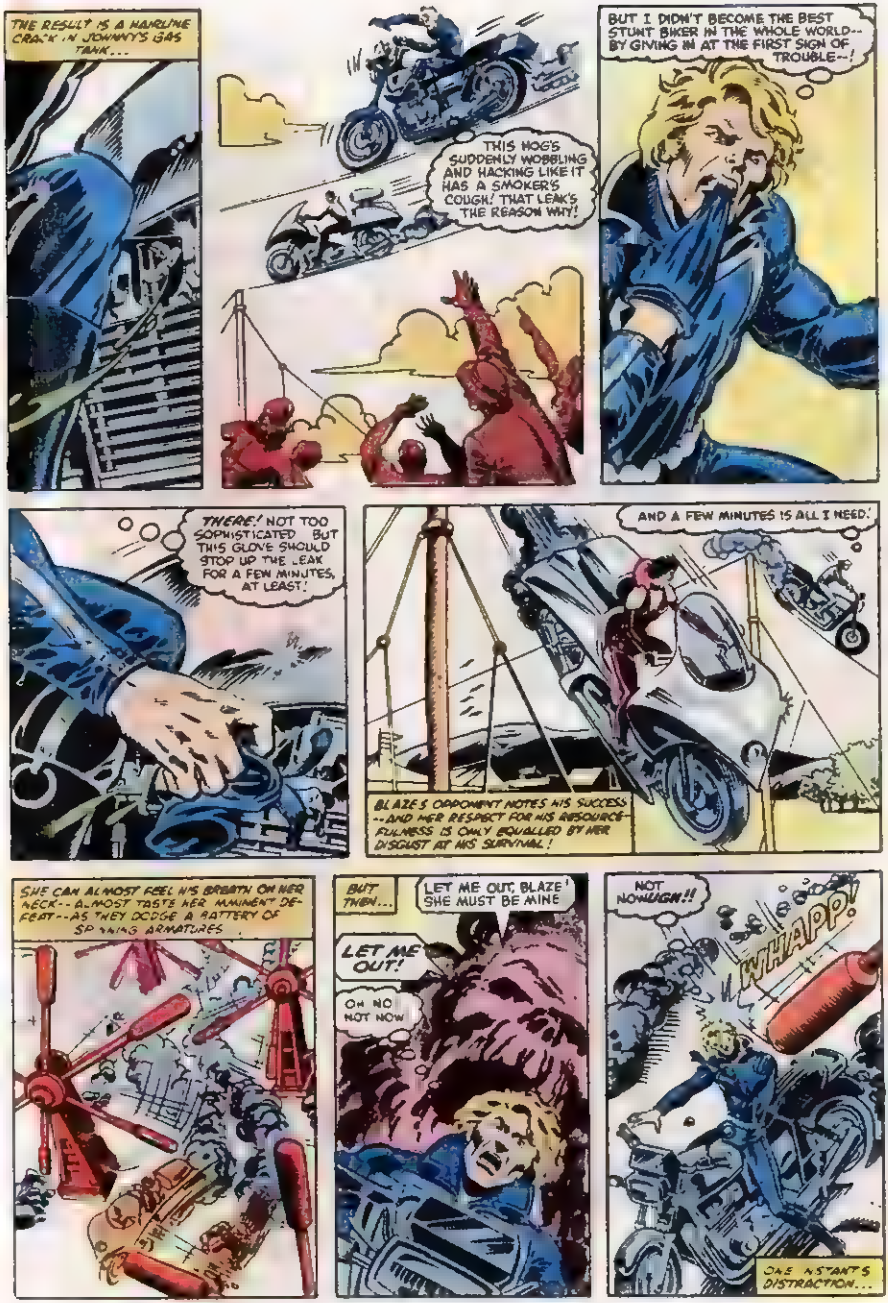
THE RESULT IS A HAIRLINE CRACK IN JOHNNY'S GAS TANK...
THIS HOG'S SUDDENLY WOBBLING AND HACKING LIKE IT HAS A SMOKER'S COUGH! THAT LEAK'S THE REASON WHY!
BUT I DIDN'T BECOME THE BEST STUNT BIKER IN THE WHOLE WORLD-- BY GIVING IN AT THE FIRST SIGN OF TROUBLE--!
THERE! NOT TOO SOPHISTICATED BUT THIS GLOVE SHOULD STOP UP THE LEAK FOR A FEW MINUTES, AT LEAST.
AND A FEW MINUTES IS ALL I NEED.
BLAZE'S OPPONENT NOTES HIS SUCCESS--AND HER RESPECT FOR HIS RESOURCEFULNESS IS ONLY EQUALLED BY HER DISGUST AT HIS SURVIVAL!
SHE CAN ALMOST FEEL HIS BREATH ON HER NECK--ALMOST TASTE HER IMMINENT DEFEAT--AS THEY DODGE A BATTERY OF SPINNING ARMATURES.
BUT THEN...
LET ME OUT, BLAZE! SHE MUST BE MINE
LET ME OUT!
OH NO NOT NOW
NOT NOW UGH!!
WHAPP!
DUE TO A SPLIT SECOND'S DISTRACTION...

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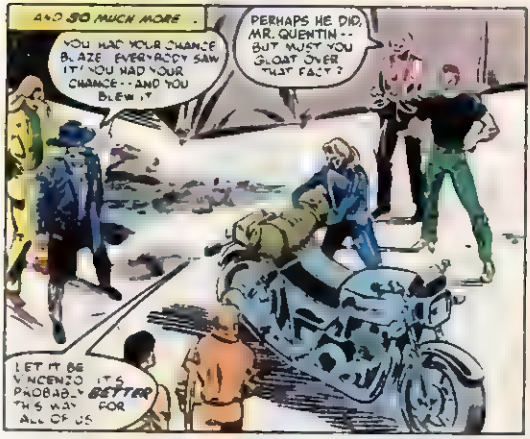
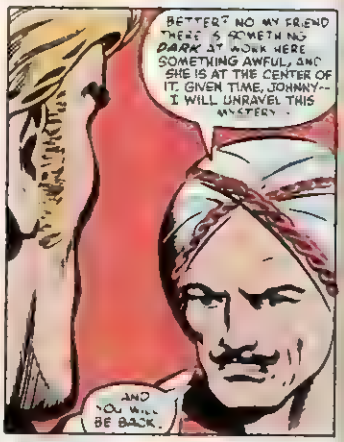
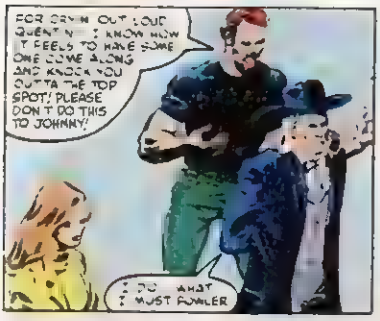
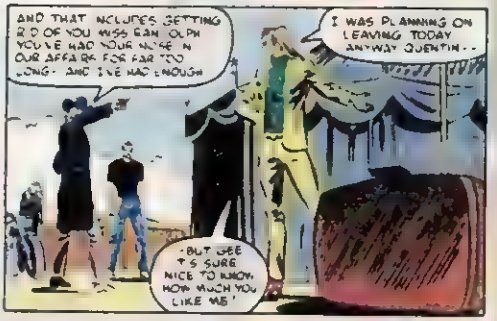

AND SO MUCH MORE .
YOU HAD YOUR CHANCE BLAZE EVERYBODY SAW IT! YOU HAD YOUR CHANCE -- AND YOU BLEW IT
PERHAPS HE DID, MR. QUENTIN -- BUT MUST YOU GLOAT OVER THAT FACT?
LET IT BE VINCENZO IT'S PROBABLY BETTER THIS WAY FOR ALL OF US


BETTER? NO MY FRIEND THERE'S SOMETHING DARK AT WORK HERE SOMETHING AWFUL, AND SHE IS AT THE CENTER OF IT. GIVEN TIME, JOHNNY -- I WILL UNRAVEL THIS MYSTERY.
AND YOU WILL BE BACK.


FOR GRYM OUT LOUD QUENTIN! I KNOW HOW IT FEELS TO HAVE SOME ONE COME ALONG AND KNOCK YOU OUTTA THE TOP SPOT! PLEASE DON'T DO THIS TO JOHNNY!
I DO WHAT I MUST FOWLER


AND THAT INCLUDES GETTING RID OF YOU MISS RANDOLPH YOU'VE HAD YOUR NOSE IN OUR AFFAIRS FOR FAR TOO LONG- AND I'VE HAD ENOUGH
I WAS PLANNING ON LEAVING TODAY ANYWAY QUENTIN...
BUT SEE IT'S SURE NICE TO KNOW HOW MUCH YOU LIKE ME!

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SEVERAL NIGHTS LATER...
MY ATTEMPTS TO TALK TO QUENTIN HAVE ONLY FED MY SUSPICIONS THAT HE IS
HE CANNOT CONTROL...HIS FIERY WORDS MASK A DEEP TERROR!
BUT, EVEN WHEN I--WHO HAVE WORKED SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH HIM FOR YEARS--THREATENED TO LEAVE THE CARNIVAL, HE JUST STARED THROUGH ME--AS IF
SO, ELIOT! YOU HAVE SEEN HOW EASILY BEAUTY AND LIFE CAN BE TRANSFORMED INTO UGLINESS AND
BUT IF THERE IS ONE TRUTH THE GREAT VINCENZO HAS LEARNED IN HIS DAY, IT IS THIS--
PING!
--SURVIVES!
--WINS!
BEAUTY IS TRANSIENT, MAGICIAN! AND ONLY THE MOST
YOU WOULD DO WELL TO LEARN THAT!

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THAT LOOK IN HER EYES! FOR A MOMENT I COULD SEE SUCH TENDERNESS REFLECTED THERE AND SUCH IMAGINING...
PERHAPS THERE IS MORE TO HER THAN THE COLD FACE SHE HAS SHOWN US
SO, VINCENZO, IT IS TIME TO DISCOVER IF THIS STEEL WIND IS AS MUCH WOMAN--
AS SHE IS
...MONSTER!?
EVEN SEEN STEEL WIND WITHOUT HER GLOVES ON, IT IS A REALIZATION HE WOULD HAVE GLADLY DONE WITHOUT.
STEEL WIND SAYS NOTHING AS VINCENZO STANDS, SLACK-JAWED, BEFORE HER. SHE SIMPLY... ADVANCES.
IF VINCENZO COULD PEER INTO HER MIND AND SEE THE PAINFUL MEMORIES, LONG BURIED, THAT SURGED UP FROM HER SUBCONSCIOUS!
...BUT THAT LIFE CAME ABRUPTLY TO AN END WHEN A FREAK EXPLOSION TURNED A PLEASURE CRUISE INTO A DEATH-RIDE!

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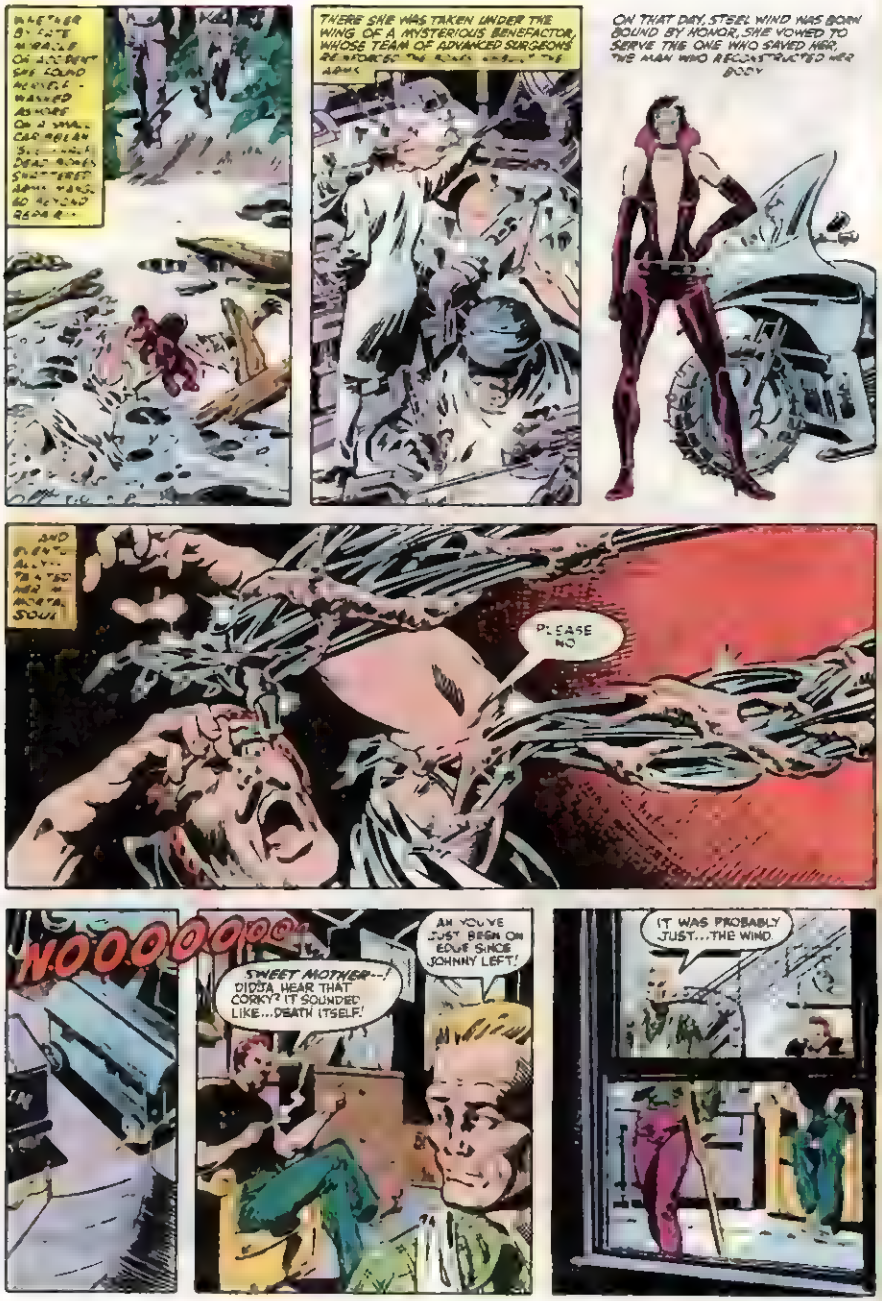
WEATHER BY LATE MORNING OR EARLY AFTERNOON SHE FOUND HERSELF WASHED ASHORE ON A SMALL CAY BELOW SAINT DOMINGUE. BONES SHATTERED, ARMS TORN, SO BEYOND PAIN...
THERE SHE WAS TAKEN UNDER THE WING OF A MYSTERIOUS BENEFACTOR, WHOSE TEAM OF ADVANCED SURGEONS RESTORED THE RAVAGED FLESH...
ON THAT DAY, STEEL WIND WAS BORN BOUND BY HONOR, SHE VOWED TO SERVE THE ONE WHO SAVED HER, THE MAN WHO RECONSTRUCTED HER BODY
AND EVEN ALVIN DRAKE HAD A MOMENT OF WEAKNESS...
PLEASE NO
NOOOOOOO
SWEET MOTHER--! DIDJA HEAR THAT CORKY? IT SOUNDED LIKE...DEATH ITSELF!
AH YOU'VE JUST BEEN ON EDGE SINCE JOHNNY LEFT!
IT WAS PROBABLY JUST...THE WIND

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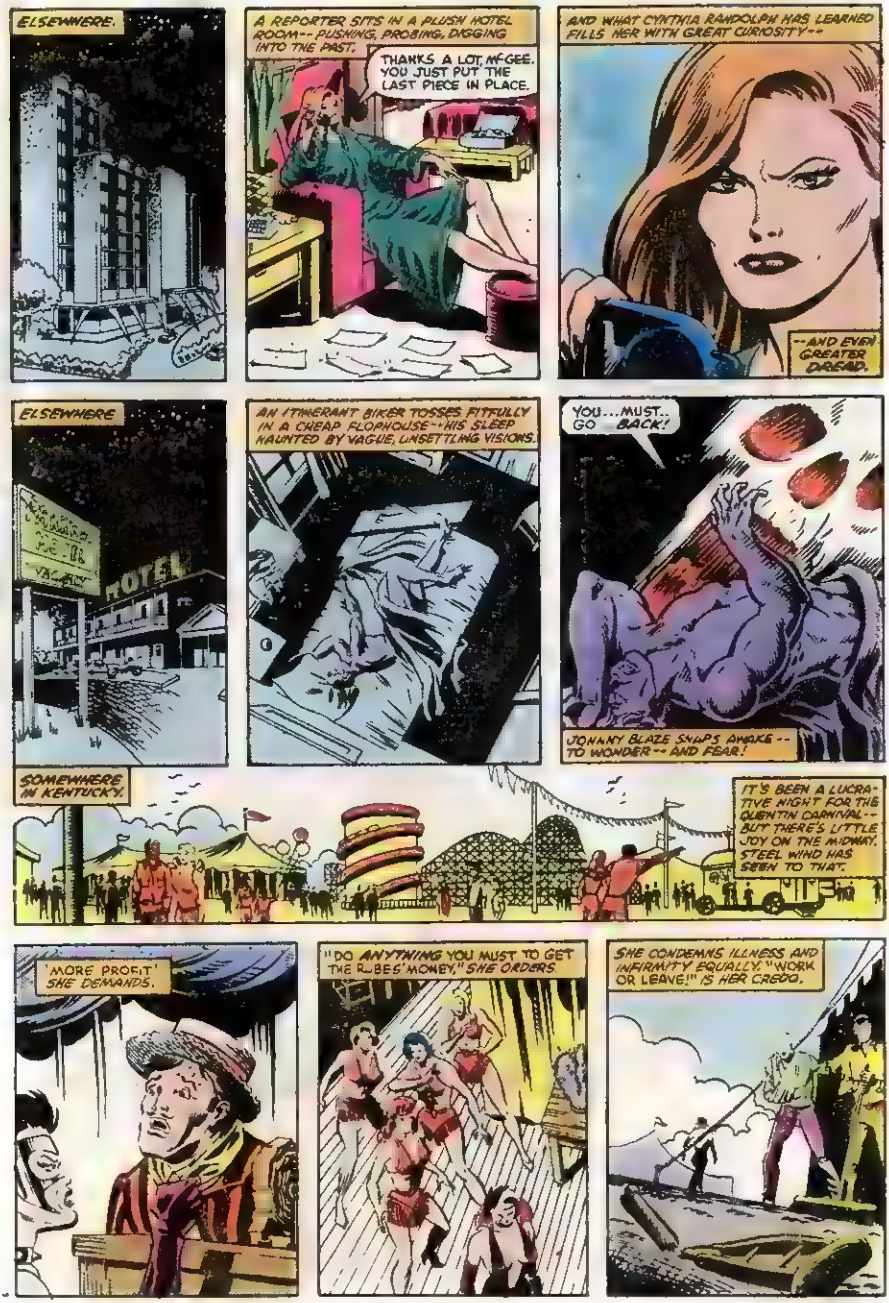
ELSEWHERE.
A REPORTER SITS IN A PLUSH HOTEL ROOM-- PUSHING, PROBING, DIGGING INTO THE PAST.
THANKS A LOT, MCGEE. YOU JUST PUT THE LAST PIECE IN PLACE.
AND WHAT CYNTHIA RANDOLPH HAS LEARNED FILLS HER WITH GREAT CURIOSITY--
--AND EVEN GREATER DREAD.
ELSEWHERE
MOTEL
AN ITINERANT BIKER TOSSES FITFULLY IN A CHEAP FLOPHOUSE--HIS SLEEP HAUNTED BY VAGUE, UNSETTLING VISIONS.
YOU...MUST.. GO BACK!
JOHNNY BLAZE SNAPS AWAKE -- TO WONDER -- AND FEAR!
SOMEWHERE IN KENTUCKY.
IT'S BEEN A LUCRATIVE NIGHT FOR THE QUENTIN CARNIVAL-- BUT THERE'S LITTLE JOY ON THE MIDWAY. STEEL WIND HAS BEEN TO THAT.
'MORE PROFIT' SHE DEMANDS.
"DO ANYTHING YOU MUST TO GET THE R..BES' MONEY," SHE ORDERS.
SHE CONDEMNS ILLNESS AND INFIRMITY EQUALLY. "WORK OR LEAVE!" IS HER CREDO.

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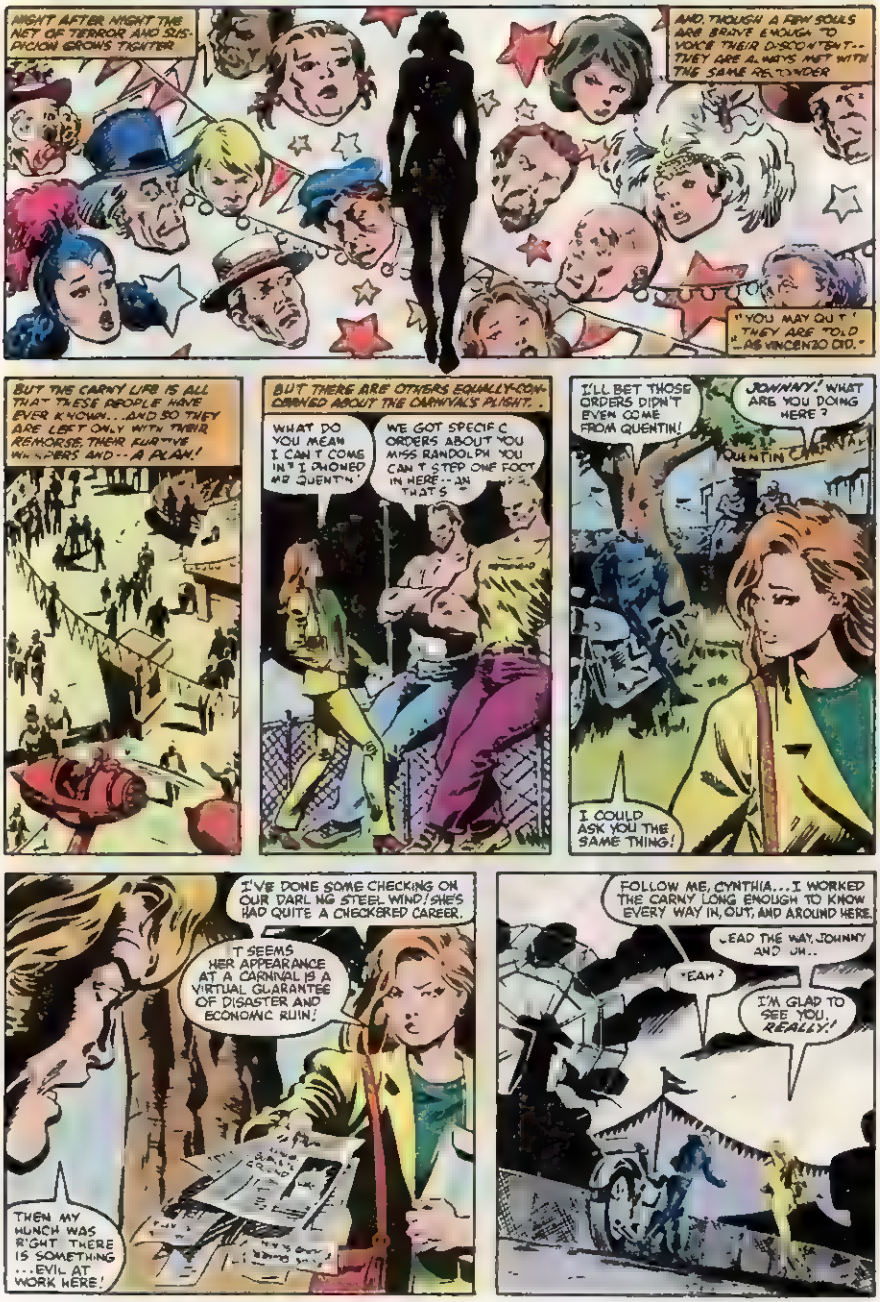
NIGHT AFTER NIGHT THE NET OF TERROR AND SUSPICION GROWS TIGHTER
AND, THOUGH A FEW SOULS ARE BRAVE ENOUGH TO VOICE THEIR DISCONTENT--THEY ARE ALWAYS MET WITH THE SAME RETORDER
"YOU MAY QUIT ' THEY ARE TOLD ..AS VINCENZO DID."
BUT THE CARNY LIFE IS ALL THAT THESE PEOPLE HAVE EVER KNOWN...AND SO THEY ARE LEFT ONLY WITH THEIR REMORSE, THEIR HURTFUL WISHERS AND--A PLAN!
BUT THERE ARE OTHERS EQUALLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE CARNIVAL'S PLIGHT..
WHAT DO YOU MEAN I CAN'T COME IN? I OWNED MR QUENTIN!
WE GOT SPECIFIC ORDERS ABOUT YOU MISS RANDOLPH! YOU CAN'T STEP ONE FOOT IN HERE--AN THAT'S
I'LL BET THOSE ORDERS DIDN'T EVEN COME FROM QUENTIN!
JOHNNY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
QUENTIN CARNIVAL
I COULD ASK YOU THE SAME THING!
I'VE DONE SOME CHECKING ON OUR DARLING STEEL WIND! SHE'S HAD QUITE A CHECKERED CAREER.
IT SEEMS HER APPEARANCE AT A CARNIVAL IS A VIRTUAL GUARANTEE OF DISASTER AND ECONOMIC RUIN!
THEN MY HUNCH WAS RIGHT! THERE IS SOMETHING ...EVIL AT WORK HERE!
FOLLOW ME, CYNTHIA...I WORKED THE CARNY LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW EVERY WAY IN, OUT, AND AROUND HERE.
LEAD THE WAY, JOHNNY AND UH..
YEAH?
I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU, REALLY!

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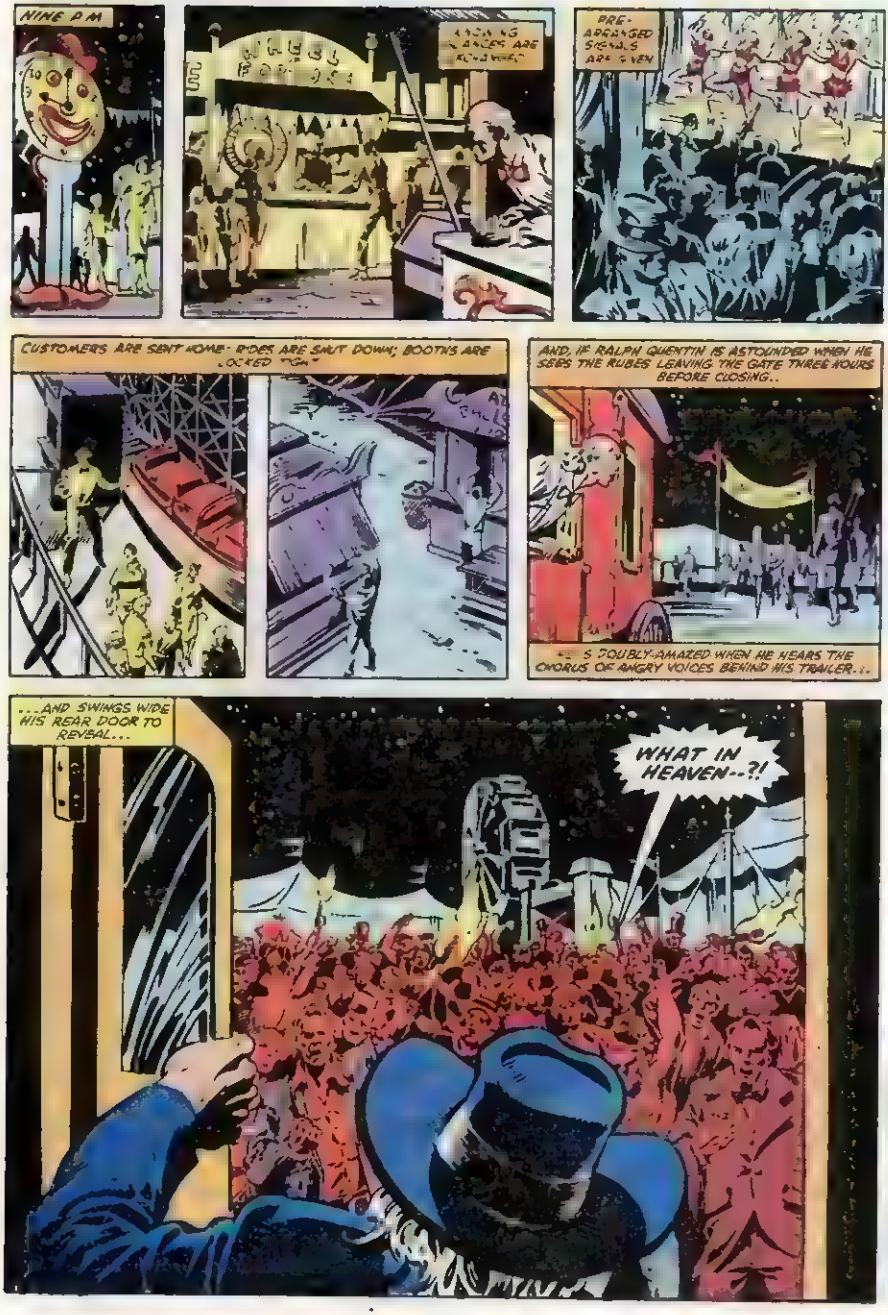
NINE P.M.
PRE-ARRANGED SIGNALS ARE GIVEN
CUSTOMERS ARE SENT HOME - RIDES ARE SHUT DOWN; BOOTHS ARE LOCKED "TIGHT"
AND, IF RALPH QUENTIN IS ASTOUNDED WHEN HE SEES THE RUBES LEAVING THE GATE THREE HOURS BEFORE CLOSING..
...AND SWINGS WIDE HIS REAR DOOR TO REVEAL...
WHAT IN HEAVEN--?!

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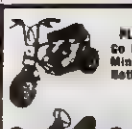

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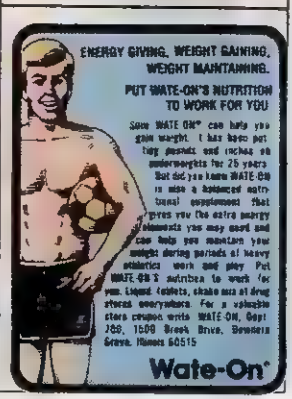

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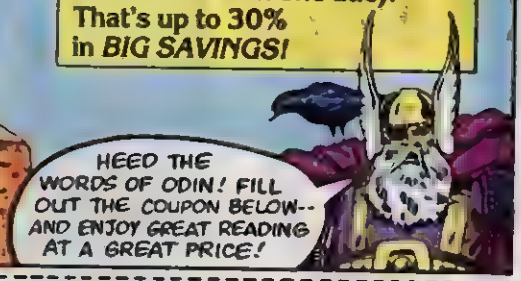

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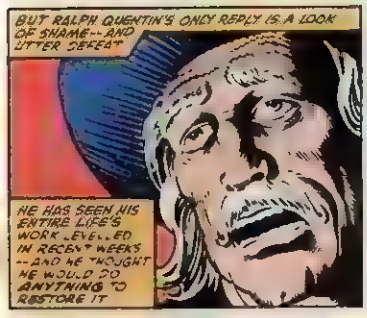
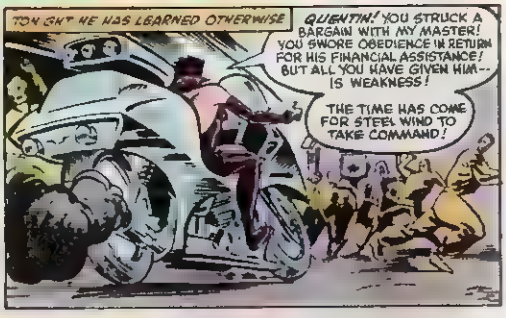
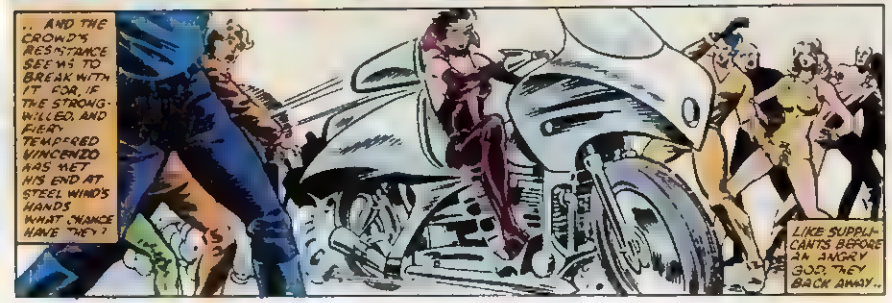

BUT RALPH QUENTIN'S ONLY REPLY IS A LOOK OF SHAME--AND UTTER DEFEAT
HE HAS SEEN HIS ENTIRE LIVES WORK UNRAVELLED IN RECENT WEEKS --AND HE THOUGHT HE WOULD DO ANYTHING TO RESTORE IT


TOM OKT HE HAS LEARNED OTHERWISE
QUENTIN! YOU STRUCK A BARGAIN WITH MY MASTER! YOU SWORE OBEDIENCE IN RETURN FOR HIS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE! BUT ALL YOU HAVE GIVEN HIM-- IS WEAKNESS!
THE TIME HAS COME FOR STEEL WIND TO TAKE COMMAND!


.. AND THE CROWD'S RESISTANCE SEEMS TO BREAK WITH IT FOR, IF THE STRONG-WILLED, AND FIERY-TEMPERED VINCENZO HAS MET HIS END AT STEEL WIND'S HANDS WHAT CHANCE HAVE THEY?
LIKE SUPPLICANTS BEFORE AN ANGRY GOD, THEY BACK AWAY..

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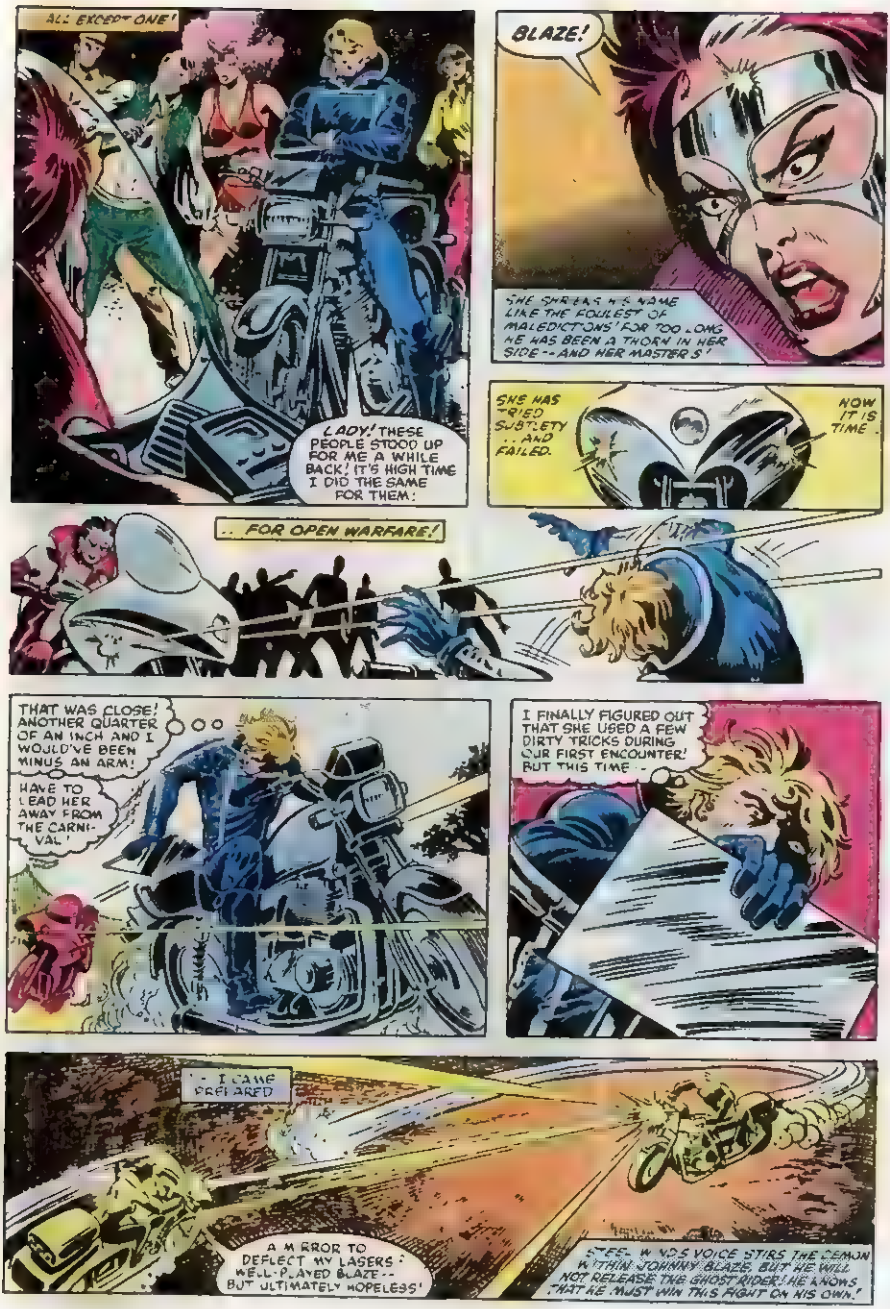
ALL EXCEPT ONE!
LADY! THESE PEOPLE STOOD UP FOR ME A WHILE BACK! IT'S HIGH TIME I DID THE SAME FOR THEM!
BLAZE!
SHE SHRIEKS MY NAME LIKE THE FOULEST OF MALEDICTIONS! FOR TOO LONG ME HAS BEEN A THORN IN HER SIDE -- AND HER MASTER'S!
SHE HAS TRIED SUBTLETY ... AND FAILED.
NOW IT IS TIME ..
.. FOR OPEN WARFARE!
THAT WAS CLOSE! ANOTHER QUARTER OF AN INCH AND I WOULD'VE BEEN MINUS AN ARM!
HAVE TO LEAD HER AWAY FROM THE CARNIVAL!
I FINALLY FIGURED OUT THAT SHE USED A FEW DIRTY TRICKS DURING OUR FIRST ENCOUNTER! BUT THIS TIME ..
.. I CAME PREPARED
A MIRROR TO DEFLECT MY LASERS! WELL-PLAYED BLAZE -- BUT ULTIMATELY HOPELESS!
STEEL WINDS VOICE STIRS THE DEMON WITHIN JOHNNY BLAZE, BUT HE WILL NOT RELEASE THE GHOST RIDER! HE KNOWS THAT HE MUST WIN THIS FIGHT ON HIS OWN!

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ONE INSTANT OF CONCENTRATION! ONE HATE-FILLED THOUGHT CHANNELLED THROUGH CYBERNETIC CIRCUITS . .
. . AND STEEL-WING'S CYCLE ERUPTS SPITTING A GEYSER OF FLAME.
DESPERATELY JOHNNY BLAZE ATTEMPTS TO SWERVE AWAY FROM THE FIERY WALL . .
. . BUT EVEN THE WORLD'S GREATEST STUNT-BIKER HAS HIS LIMITS!
HANDS OF FLAME CARESS HIM . . DRAGGING HIM TOWARD A HOT DOOM!
BUT THEN--
--THE GHOST RIDER IS FREE . .
I DID IT! AT LAST I HAVE THWARTED BLAZE'S WILL --- AND EMERGED DESPITE HIM! FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER--I FORCED OUR TRANSFORMATION!
AND A GOOD THING IT IS! HAD I NOT RISEN FROM HIS PSYCHE'S DEPTHS, BLAZE WOULD HAVE SURELY MET HIS END TODAY--AND I WOULD HAVE BEEN CONSIGNED TO ETERNAL LIMBO!
Y-YOU . . ARE THE DEVIL THAT LIVES INSIDE BLAZE?
YOU'VE HEARD OF ME--HAVE YOU? GOOD!
THEN PERHAPS YOU'VE ALSO HEARD HOW I CAN CREATE A MOTORCYCLE OF MYSTIC HELLFIRE!
WHICH MEANS OF COURSE THAT I'VE NO NEED . .
". . FOR THIS ONE!
SKA-DOOM!
FEEL WHAT BIKE HAS BEEN BUILT TO WITHSTAND FAR MORE THAN THIS . . .
BUT THE GHOST RIDER CAN SEE THE . . . OUT OF HIS OTHER EYES!

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SHE FIGHTS DOWN THAT HORROR, STRUGGLES TO REGAIN HER COMPOSURE AND CONCENTRATION...
WHAT? YOU SEEK TO STOP ME WITH PETTY TECHNOLOGIES?
MISCREANT! THE GHOST RIDER SHALL WREAK HIS VENGEANCE UPON YOU!
WHAT IS THIS?! THESE MISSILES MATCH MY EVERY MOVE, AS IF ATTRACTED BY THE HELLISH HEAT I GENERATE!
WELL--IF IT'S HEAT THEY CRAVE!
"--IT IS HEAT THEY SHALL HAVE!"
SHOOM!
SOCKETS--SEES THE VILE POWER REFLECTED THERE...
HA-HA-HA! YOU ARE ALL THE SAME IN YOU--NO MATTER YOUR WEAPONS--YOU ARE NOTHING TO YOUR BOAS!
YOU ARE ALL COWARDS! ALL RIPE FOR THE GHOST RIDER'S WRATH!
THEN SHE TURNS--ONLY TO SEE THAT ALLURING DEMON THAT HAS

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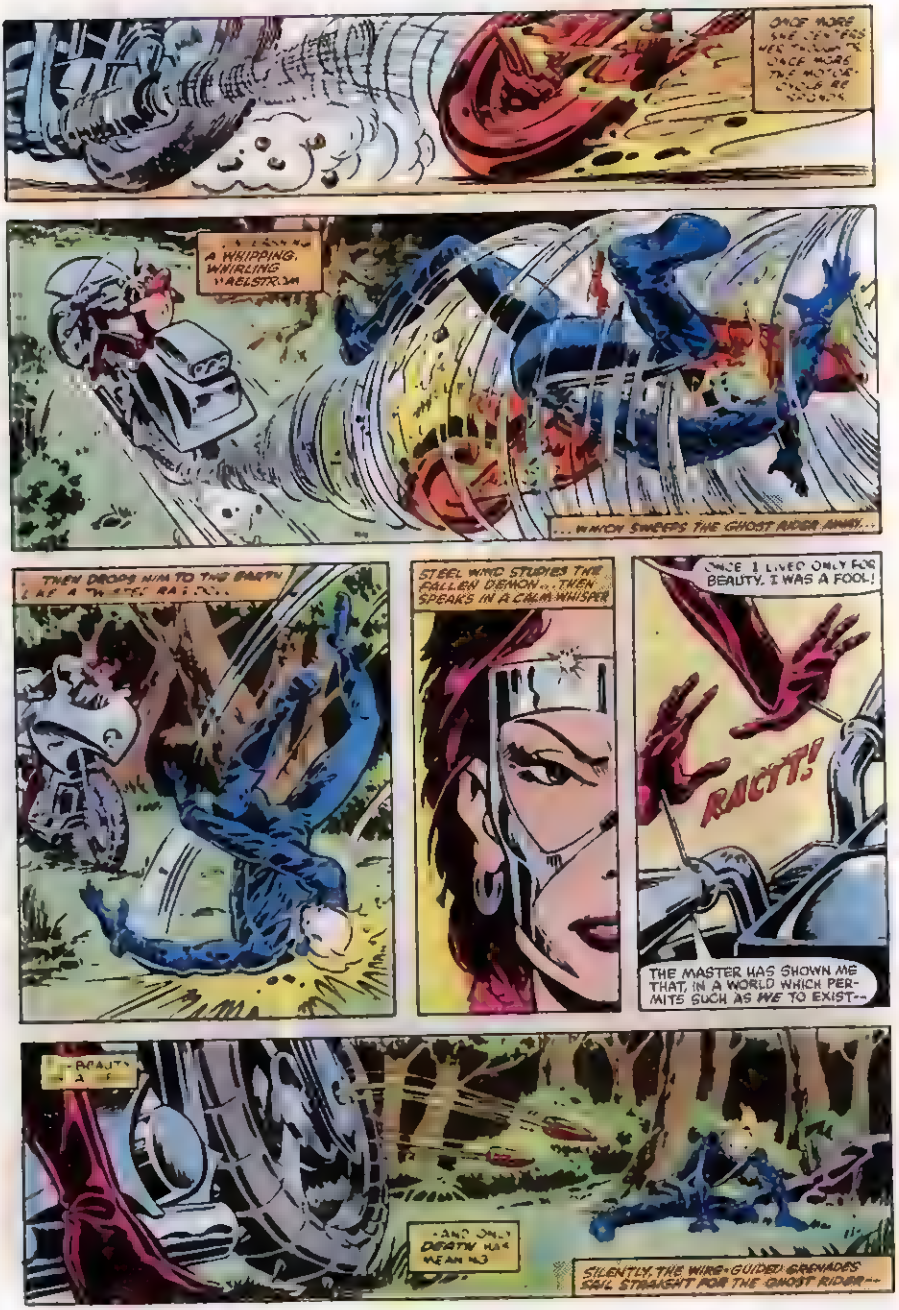
ONCE MORE SHE LETS HER FOLLOWERS ONCE MORE THE MYSTICAL POWERS BE SUMMONED
A WHIPPING, WHIRLING HAILSTORM
...WHICH SWEEPS THE GHOST RIDER AWAY...
THEN DROPS HIM TO THE EARTH LIKE A WINGED RAIN...
STEEL WIND STUDIES THE FALLEN DEMON...THEN SPEAKS IN A CALM WHISPER
ONCE I LIVED ONLY FOR BEAUTY. I WAS A FOOL!
RACTT!
THE MASTER HAS SHOWN ME THAT, IN A WORLD WHICH PERMITS SUCH AS ME TO EXIST--
BEAUTY IS A
AND ONLY DEATH HAS MEAN NO
SILENTLY, THE WIRE-GUIDED GRENADES SAIL STRAIGHT FOR THE GHOST RIDER--

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GHOST WRITERS!

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP
387 Park Avenue South
New York, New York 10016

TOM DeFALCO
EDITOR
LINDA GRANT
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Dear Tom
This is my first letter to you, but not my last! Since I was a kid I've read Marvel comics, and I think they're the best. GHOST RIDER is my favorite title, and the recent developments in his character and the storyline have been great. All the way from #68 to #71 the art and stories have been at a high which has held my interest.
Now I'm looking forward to next issue — but thirty days is too long to wait!

D J. Walsh
40 West St
Pepperell, MA 01463

Dear Tom
I have just received GHOST RIDER #71 and it is an excellent comic. "The Tears of Adam Henderson" was a terrific Ghost Rider adventure, and Null was an unexpected foe. His unusual power made for an interesting clash with the Ghost Rider.
I'm sure that next issue Johnny will try to resist the Ghost Rider, and I hope he will be able to maintain his control over the demon. GR's getting too wild for me!

Terry Lee Wright
Box 42
Castalian Springs, TN 37031

Me too, Terry!

Dear Tom
I would like to commend you on GHOST RIDER. It is a great title! In fact, it's my favorite comic book.
I just bought issue #71 and the story was great as usual, but where was Bob Budiansky? I think his work on GHOST RIDER has been exceptional!

Jeff Mazes
121 Dunbar Road S.
Waterloo, Ontario
CANADA N2L 2E6

Thanks for the vote of confidence, Jeff. And, don't worry, you'll be seeing a lot more of Bob Budiansky's scorching pencils right here!

Dear Tom,
My goodness, is the Ghost Rider, or rather Johnny Blaze becoming an empathic hero? I quote from the conclusion of issue #71: "Johnny Blaze. For him there is no hope...there is no love. There is only survival — and the long, long nights to come." Who among us has not felt like that at some time? If we're lucky we do not feel like that often, but we are all subject to it at times.
There is another aspect of empathy present. There is no doubt that Ghost Rider enjoys himself. He is something inside Johnny that comes out from time to time and has some fun. We all like to have a good time, but many of us sometimes wonder if the seeking and having these good times does not sometimes operate against us finding (or even seeking to find) the route to a deeper, more permanent, happiness. Those among us who are lucky can reconcile these conflicts, or, perhaps, find that there is nothing that needs to be reconciled.
Johnny Blaze is not lucky — but he makes us see just how lucky we are. Or, we might wonder if it really is luck, or do we deserve our fates? Almost certainly a mixture of the two, but which one dominates? Crossing back over to the world of Johnny Blaze: What did he do to deserve his fate of becoming the Ghost Rider? Of course, he erred in dealing with the dark forces, but what fault led him to that? The web of fate becomes more complex — or rather the webs of fate, ours and that of Johnny Blaze.

T.M. Maple
(no address given)

Dear Tom
GHOST RIDER #71 was magnificent! Seeing Don Perlin back made me want to cheer!

Philippe R. Dejean
1796 Grand Concourse
Bronx, N.Y. 10457

Keep cheering, Philippe. I've managed to cajole Dashing Don into penciling another upcoming Ghost Rider adventure.

Dear Tom:
I recently read the list of Marvel Inactive Super Heroes that appeared in the back of MARVEL SUPER HERO CONTEST OF CHAMPIONS #3. According to that list Johnny Blaze is an inactive super hero because he no longer is able to control the demon and force him to use his power for good. What does this mean? Is the Ghost Rider going into retirement?

W.H. Bryson, Jr.
Box 113
Jesse, WV 24849

No way, W.H.! It simply means that Johnny Blaze cannot be numbered as a super hero until he can learn to master the Ghost Rider's penchant for evil.

Dear Tom,
The Ghost Rider has always amazed me with his Hellspawned powers and his death-like face. The covers of this title have been excellent, as well as the art. I think that Bob Budiansky has done wonders with the vengeful Ghost Rider! This comic has turned around, thanks to Roger Stern (whose work I also enjoy in THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN), Bob's pulsating pencils, and Dave Simons' terrific inks. And the colors seem to glow like Hellfire itself!
But, I did like GHOST RIDER better when Johnny Blaze had control of his evil alter-ego.

Brian Burlingame
4 Chester St
Newton Highlands, MA 02161

I've got news for you, Brian, so did Johnny!

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BULLPEN BULLETINS

HO-HUM...

'nother day, 'nother Bullpen Page, As Editor-in-Chief, it's my duty to write these things... yawn. You might think it'd be exciting, being able to reach many millions of readers every month with whatever words I care to write, but... sigh. It gets old after a while. Ho-hum. I wish something interesting would happen to liven things up...

ALAS! We interrupt our feature for a message from the Law!

Hi, Callers—Yawn.

Greetings from your friendly neighbor [illegible] while I'm [illegible] the wooly west coast. But, I also wanna clue you in to the sensational news that, in just two short, hectic years, mighty Marvel Productions has already become America's second largest producer of Saturday morning cartoon shows! Yep, as sure as Spidey wears a speckled sweatshirt, we're gonna have two full hours of typical Marvel madness cowing at you on the tube—an hour on NBC and an hour on CBS, starting Saturday, September 11th.

The shows themselves are: SPIDER-MAN AND HIS AMAZING FRIENDS, held over from the last season due to popular demand (you see, there's this guy Popular, who's got a kid brother named Demand, and they—aw, forget it!). And, to make it even more of a blockbuster, we're adding a sensational, new half-hour starring THE INCREDIBLE HULK, narrated by my all-time favorite comicbook personality. Modesty prevents me from mentioning his name, but if you wanna hear what I really sound like (if your tender ears can stand the mellifluous tones) then tickle the tube, tiger! Spidey, Greenskin, and yours truly, together at last! How lucky can you get?!!

Meanwhile, on CBS, (at the very same hour, wouldja believe—!!) you'll find two of Marvel/Intermedia's latest comedy masterpieces! One is "PANDAMONIUM", the spectacular adventures of three lovable, laughable pandas, braving the most far-out dangers and disasters our maniacal minds could create. Our second half-hour is "MEATBALLS AND SPAGHETTI", and—since Marvel never does the expected—it's got nothing to do with food! It's the wild and wacky shenanigans of a pair of rollickin' rock musicians, their antisocial dog, and a fascinating, fetching, fantastic female named Spaghetti! You gotta see 'em to believe 'em!

And now, for all you music lovers, I've written a little message to be sung to the tune of "Don't Cry For Me, Argentina" from the hit show EVITA! If you don't know the tune, forget it—this won't make sense to you. If you do know it, it still won't make sense!

Don't cry for me, True Believers.
You know I never left you.
I still love comics,
And movies, also.
I kept my promise—
And so did Mantronnes!

Okay, that's it! You've suffered enough! It's time to return you to Superstretch Shooster and his Bullpen Bandits! So, till the Silver Surfer buys a fright-wig, I leave you with this sly and sobering thought:—

Excelsior

Stan

WOW!

Talk about *service!* That sure knocked me back on my heels. Good old Stan... being a Hollywood Mogul hasn't changed our fearless Publisher and Presenter. He's still nuts.

AND NOW...

I've got so much stuff to tell you, it's boggling. It probably won't all fit. Oh, well. We'll go till we run out space.

—I was there at the wedding of *Spider-Man, Avengers* and *Dr. Strange* scribe Roger Stern, whose bride was the lovely and impressively intelligent Carmela Merlo, a teacher of chemistry at Cornell University! The ceremony was held on June 19th on the lawn of the home of Bill and Lisa Turner in Ithaca, [illegible] folks!" No kidding. A [illegible] who attended was taken by photog Tim Gray at the reception, and appears below.

—I was there at the July 24th wedding of former Marvel typesetter and colorist Carl Gafford, whose bride was the lovely and impressively intelligent Sharon Ing, a computer graphics software programmer for Raytheon! Sharon is also a former Marvel person, actually, having served ably as an intern, then later as an assistant in our Special Projects Department. Now she's off hobnobbing with databanks, and Carl is currently trying his hand at writing elsewhere, but they'll be back!! Till then, we wish them all the best! Long may they [illegible]

(L.to R) Christie Scheele, colorist; Tom DeFalco, editor; Carmela Merlo, blushing bride; Roger Stern, glowing groom; John Byrne, best man; Mark Gruenwald, editor and Belinda Glass, unindicted co-conspirator, standing in front of a large, unidentified Editor-in-Chief who *must* be standing on a cinder block

WHAT?!?!

Out of space already?? Bah, humbug! Well, I'll be back next month to tell you all about the San Diego Con and who won an impressive award there, the Chicago Con, and what disaster almost happened there, and which Marvel person just got a *big* promotion, and Marvel's own Renaissance Man, and...

Say what, Stan? What do you mean I won't be back next month—Hey, look, I was just kidding about you being nuts! Honest!

Uh-oh

[illegible]

[illegible] 001

SPIDER-WOMAN #47 — Remember Marvel staffer ANN NOCENTI's writing debut in *Bizarre Adventures* #32? Well, we—and you—liked it so much we're giving her a crack at her own series. And as for newcomer BRIAN POSTMAN's artwork —well, when you see it, we think you'll be as excited about it as we are. Thanks to those two (with a little push from editor MARK GRUENWALD) this wall-crawler is really coming off the wall.

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #16—JOHN ROMITA JR. (pencils) and JOHN ROMITA SR. (inks) team up to introduce the all-new *Captain Marvel!* And wait until you see her!

MARVEL GRAPHIC NOVEL #4: THE NEW MUTANTS—Guessing time is over! Now, at last, see Professor Xavier's new team of mutants for yourself! CHRIS CLAREMONT and BOB McLEOD did the honors. All you have to do is [illegible]

THE MIGHTY MARVEL CHECKLIST

MARVEL FANFARE #16 — Two Thing
Rogue Man — Iron Fist
"I Am Not Me At All"
Cyclops — In Search Of!
DAZZLER #19
G.I. JOE #5
MARVEL TALES #140
AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #265
CAPTAIN AMERICA #316
Peggy — #35
GHOST RIDER #15
Ghost Rider — #16
☐ MOON KNIGHT #26
☐ DR. STRANGE #56 — Art by PAUL SMITH
Doctor — #57
Witch Trials — #4
Quicksilver — #19
Dr. Strange — #20
☐ X-MEN #166 — *Meet Binary!* DAVE COCKRUM'S farewell issue
☐ CONAN #141
☐ MARVEL TALES #145 — Reprints *Amazing Spider-Man #7*, by STAN LEE and STEVE [illegible]
Hobgoblin — #17
☐ POWER MAN IRON FIST #88
☐ VISION/SCARLET WITCH (Limited Series) #3
☐ G.I. JOE #6
☐ FANTASTIC FOUR #249
☐ MARVEL TEAM-UP #124 — Spider-Man and [illegible]
☐ IRON MAN #166
☐ PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #73
BEGINNINGS #114
Stan Lee's Diary #20
☐ MASTER OF KUNG FU #119
☐ WHAT IF #36 — "What If the Fantastic Four Had Not Gained Their Powers?" and "What If Nova Hadn't Lost His Powers?"
HERCULES (Limited Series) #2

MARVEL MAGAZINES

☐ CRAZY #91
☐ THE SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #82

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[illegible]

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MARVEL GRAPHIC NOVELS

#03: [illegible]
#04: [illegible]
#05: [illegible] — The Avengers
#06: [illegible]

MARVEL GRAPHIC NOVELS

☐ #4: THE NEW MUTANTS — See Hype Box.

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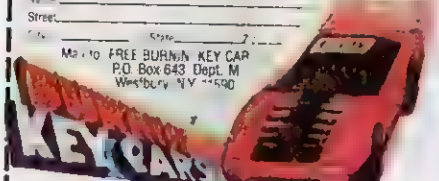

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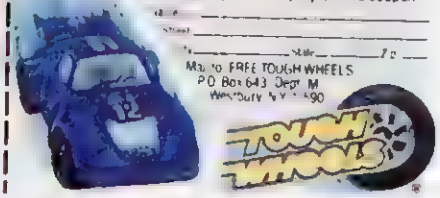

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FOR ONE GLORIOUS INSTANT, SHE IS AGAIN THE GENTLE ARTIST OF YESTERDAY.
FOR ONE GLORIOUS INSTANT, SHE SEES BEAUTY.
THE INSTANT PASSES. STEEL WIND BEGINS TO SCREAM--
--AND SCREAM!
MORNING.
A WEARY JOHNNY BLAZE STAGGERS BACK TO THE QUENTIN CARNIVAL...
...TO FACE A BARRAGE OF QUESTIONS ABOUT THE LONG NIGHT'S BATTLE, AND THE FATE OF STEEL WIND.
HIS REPLY IS SIMPLE:
"YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO KNOW."
EPILOGUE. ONE WEEK LATER.
I AM... DISPLEASED, RENALDO.
WE PUT MUCH TIME AND ENERGY INTO STEEL WIND. YET SHE FAILED US.
SHE CANNOT BE FULLY HELD RESPONSIBLE, SIR. I HAVE... S-SEEN THAT DEMON. I HAVE F-FELT ITS TOUCH.
SO YOU CONSTANTLY REMIND ME.
IT WOULD SEEM THAT, IN ORDER TO FACILITATE OUR PLANS FOR THE QUENTIN CARNIVAL, WE MUST CIRCUMVENT THE DEMON--
--BY DEALING MORE DIRECTLY WITH...THE MAN.
AS YOU WISH, FREAKMASTER.
AS YOU WISH.
DAILY TIMES
QUENTIN CARNIVAL TO ANNOUNCE TRIUMPHANT RETURN OF JOHNNY BLAZE!
TO BE CONTINUED...

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